European countries, during the 1960s. But it had little impact on the Chinese curriculum due to the Cultural Revolution taking place at the time. The international features of Chinese curriculum reform could be made clearer by comparing them with those of Western cases.

The second weakness is the lack of any consideration of the ancient history of mathematics in China. The title “Modern history of China’s secondary mathematics curriculum” would be more appropriate, given this oversight. Methodologically, the third weakness is the failure to distinguish between historical materials, such as curriculum documents, textbooks, and key interview data, and the conclusions that are deduced from the argument. Some of the conclusions sound tentative and possibly subject to negotiation. The book fails to list important information and questions that would clarify what is needed for further research. The fourth weakness is that it lacks critical analysis. For example, it is necessary to present both supporting and opposing opinions and their counter-arguments in all historical periods. The discussions of both successful and failed experiences are not enough. Despite these shortcomings, in terms of curriculum reform process analysis, the book is well-structured, very informative, and provides a comprehensive account for those interested in the history of Chinese curriculum reform in mathematics.

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百年中国教科书论 [*One Hundred Years of School Textbooks in China*]. 石鸥 [Shi, Ou]. 长沙, 中国: 湖南师范大学出版社 [Changsha, China: Hunan Normal University Press], 2013. 249 pp. (paperback), ¥48, ISBN: 978-7-5648-1398-7.

This book takes an empirical approach to a discussion of school textbooks in selected subjects to reflect on the evolving development of education under

different political administrative era since the end of the 19th century. The educational influences are explored in each era, especially in relation to students' personal moral development, the development of the modern state and social control.

Shi demonstrates how the selected editions of school textbooks published by different institutions present different perspectives on Western scientific civilization, modern ethics, and democratic politics to students and other readers during the first two decades of the 20th century. He investigates how the production of texts during these years was related to the context of decentralized governmental control, a free market in publishing school textbooks, and the political vision of the writers, whether from a liberal perspective or otherwise. He presents this period as a "golden era" of diversified school textbook development. By contrast, Shi criticizes the unified national curriculum and school textbooks highly controlled by the People's Educational Press (PEP) since the 1950s, which Shi argues have impeded students' personal development.

Shi's findings fill significant gaps in existing research into school textbook development, particularly as it relates to the end of Qing dynasty, the Republican era and the Chinese Communist Party (CCP) revolutionary bases. He has collected plenty of first-hand data from the original textbooks that offer very useful references to researchers on this topic. A number of interesting historical insights emerge from these chapters. For example, based on his careful analysis of how far school textbooks present the knowledge of Western modernization, Shi compares the content of school textbooks with ideas in *The New Youth* journal. He demonstrates that school textbooks had an overwhelming influence on grassroots participation in the May Fourth Movement. Shi also found that many texts supporting Western enlightenment ideas simultaneously embraced distinctively Confucian values. This challenges scholars who have argued that the attack on Confucian traditions in the New Culture Movement demonstrated intellectuals' intention to deconstruct Confucian values so as to destroy the old system and substitute it with a new social order based on ideas of the Western enlightenment.

A coherent thread runs through Shi's findings. His representation of the Republican period as a golden era of textbook diversity intends to offer some practical advice to contemporary policymakers. In relation to the period of the PRC, Shi stresses the influence of the PEP, which has exercised a high degree of

control over the publication of school curriculum products, taking sole—or, more recently, primary—responsibility for interpreting policy objectives and transmitting them through school subjects. Compared with earlier chapters, however, he appears to lose the focus of his study at this point and seems not to progress logically from the focus on school textbooks. There is an absence in the textbook investigation of an understanding of the implications of the contemporary political effort to bolster its own legitimacy and shape national identity, particularly the impact of the current nation-building project. Furthermore, this book pays little attention to the socioeconomic, cultural, ideological, and political contexts which are essential for the critical analysis of textbooks. This may lead to ambiguity in the understanding of the relationship between school textbooks and the dominant political power holders who select and adapt school knowledge to stabilize a potentially disorderly population for purposes of social control. From this perspective, the book reveals a lack of deep engagement with the theoretical framework, which might limit readers' understanding of the relationship between school textbooks and state control. However, addressing the question of how far school textbooks reinforced a unified political ideology and state legitimacy in the past under the leadership of the CCP is unavoidable when researching the history of school textbook development in modern China. Without confronting this question in the current era, the author is unable to support his analysis with convincing evidence.

Nonetheless, this is a valuable book, which provides a useful contribution to knowledge regarding a century of Chinese school textbooks.

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